THE DEEP-SEA PEARL.

BY EDITH M. THOMAS.

The love of my life came not
As love unto others is cast;
For mine was a secret wound—
But the wound grew a pearl, at last.

The divers may come and go,
The tides, they arise and fall;
The pearl in its shell lies sealed,
Ah! the Deep Sea covers all.

Aunt Tabitha's Wedding Gown.

By Margaret Dodge.

THE gown was a pale gray taffeta dotted here and there with tiny pink rosebuds. It was evidently an old gown, but made in the voluminous middle-of-the-century fashion that would adapt itself easily to the style at the end of the century. Indeed, little Mrs. Vining, kneeling on the floor in her attic storeroom and spreading the lustrous fabric across the top of the big Noah's Ark trunk, was already—in fancy, at least—"taking in" here and "letting out" there, with a certainty of success, born of long experience.

For eighteen years Mrs. Vining had been making over for a family of three pretty daughters, and as she said to herself, she could "almost do it with her eyes shut." To-day, however, Mrs. Vining was planning for none of these pretty daughters. Once, indeed, when she heard the sound of a girl's voice in the room below she started and crumpled the folds of the silk together almost guiltily.

"I don't care," she said to herself, when the voice died away. "I don't care, I'm going to have this silk for my very own. It will make over as good as new without a bit of trimming except what I've got in the house, and I do so want something that's pretty and in style!"

The last words came with the rush of a long pent-up stream. Not since the girls had outgrown their baby clothes had Mrs. Vining owned a gown that even remotely approached that ideal.

The Vinings lived in a pretty cottage in a popular suburb, kept a trim maid-of-all work, gave teas and provided music and dancing lessons for their daughters in addition to the regular courses at the public schools. In fact, they had enough for the comforts of life with a little left over for the luxuries; but that little, either in whole or part, never fell to Mrs. Vining.

One month it went for a tea-table for Ellen, the eldest, who had social aspirations; another month it was absorbed by a subscription to the boat club for Bertha, the athletic daughter, or by dancing lessons for fifteen-year-old Edith.

Then there were always the gowns—gowns for Ellen's whist parties and Bertha's tennis club and Edith's dancing class; gowns of cotton and crepon and silk and muslin, gowns that even when manufactured at home and made over from material that was "in the house" in some way ate up every penny that the little mother had laid by for her own modest outfit.

In the end, Mrs. Vining always either attended Dawton teas and church sociables arrayed in a prehistoric black silk, or stayed away altogether. Of late she had always stayed away; and the three girls said that it really was not worth while for mother to have good clothes, for she never went anywhere and didn't care.

Being really amiable and sweet-natured girls, they probably believed what they said. Indeed, it's quite likely that it never occurred to them that mother didn't care to go anywhere because she had no suitable clothes. Meantime, Mrs. Vining said nothing at all.

But just within the last week Mrs. Vining had come to care very much, both about clothes and about "going somewhere." In two weeks there was to be a reunion of the Avery family at the old place in Averytown, New Hampshire, and she had been asked to write the poem.

"You see I haven't forgotten the lovely poetry you used to write in the days when you were Grace Avery and the 'Averytown poet, belle and 'glass of fashion,' all in one," wrote the home-staying cousin who had sent out the invitations, "and I count on you as my chief attraction." Which letter goes far toward explaining the special disfavor with which Mrs. Vining had eyed the prehistoric black silk when she took it down that morning for the sixteenth course of alteration.

Mrs. Vining was the mother of grown daughters; but she was such a bright-eyed, pink-cheeked and altogether youthful little mother that it is not to be wondered at that she shrank from the ordeal of returning to what the newspapers would call "the scene of her girlish triumphs" gowned in a black silk that was shiny where it ought to have been lustreless, narrow where it ought to have been broad, and broad where it should have been narrow—a gown, in fact, that exhibited all the known depravity of clothes that have outlived their allotted period of service.

"I suppose I'm horribly selfish and worldly-minded," the little mother had said to herself that morning, as she sat in the study trying to read the Woman's page in the Boston World, "but it does seem as if I couldn't bear it if a way wasn't opened for me to have a new gown for that reunion."

Just then something in the fashion notes caught her attention and set her to reading in earnest.

"Revival of Taffeta Silks.—Among the most attractive gowns in course of making for winter festivities are taffeta silks figured in tiny flowers, like those worn by our grandmothers. Indeed, it is said that many such gowns are being resurrected from old trunks and chests by the lucky owners of such ancestral finery, and with only slight alterations will grace many of the season's teas and receptions."

"Taffeta silk — ancestral finery," dropped disjointedly from Mrs. Vining's lips as she laid down the paper. "Why, there is Aunt Tabitha's wedding gown!"

That wedding gown! If ever there was a little illustration of the proverb, "Every dog has his day," it was that ancient garment. A dozen times every year for twenty years it had been dug out from the ponderous Noah's Ark of a trunk for examination and final rejection.

It had been suggested as a ball dress, as a tea-gown, as a lining for an opera-wrap, as almost every article of feminine apparel. It had been handled, literally and figuratively, until it was a wonder that a rag of the original fabric remained. In fact, "I suppose I must get along with Aunt Tabitha's wedding gown," had come to be the Vining family expression for "I must give up getting anything new," while that heirloom itself was regarded as a symbol of renunciation.

Yes, the girls certainly would laugh when they heard that at last the despised gown was in style and that their mother was to wear it at the Avery reunion! At least that was what Mrs. Vining had thought as she folded her paper and started up-stairs.

It was not until she had been kneeling for some ten minutes beside the Noah's Ark trunk in the little attic storeroom that the guilty fear already referred to seized her. Suppose the girls should want the taffeta themselves? To be sure she had only the day before given them money for a gown apiece; but those were to be evening affairs of filmy chiffon and lace. Wouldn't Ellen, the eldest, ask for the taffeta when she knew that taffetas were "in!"

At the thought Mrs. Vining suddenly rose with the precious silk pressed to her breast, her pink cheeks pinker and her bright eyes brighter than ever was their wont. "It's mine—mine!" she whispered, "I can't give it up. I do so want a gown that's pretty and in style just this once!" Then, hearing a sound of girlish laughter below, she thrust the rustling folds into the remotest corner of the big trunk, lowered the lid, and crept down-stairs as cautiously as is she had been a housebreaker.

"I'll take it to my room and begin on it this very afternoon," she thought.

But that afternoon proved an unusually busy one, even for this busy woman. First, a neighbor called a moment for a fancy-work pattern, and stayed an hour. Then the girls brought in mounds of samples from which mother must help them select their new gowns, and later in the day an important committee meeting of her sewing society drew Mrs. Vining away to the church vestry, there to discuss ways and means of providing the heathen with the garb of civilization.

All the time that gray taffeta silk with the pink rosebuds existed as an unchanging background against which were outlined all the events of the day. Even the girls' gowns aroused only a half-hearted attention. At the committee meeting she barely escaped forever losing caste with her fellow committee-women by voting that so many yards of taffeta silk with pink figures he bought for garments for the heathen, instead of the unbleached muslin commonly appropriated for that purpose.

And at the neighborhood sociable that evening Mrs. Vining was present in body only. Even when talking with the rector, or looking over a photograph album with the doctor's wife, she was, in fancy, walking up and down the old dance hall of the Avery homestead, arm in arm with her favorite cousin; she was sitting at the head of the big dinner-table in the dear old panelled dining-room; or reading a poem to a hushed audience in the red parlor—and always she was clad in a rustling gray gown dotted with tiny pink rosebuds, made up in the latest style.

Perhaps it was because of the encroachment of the waking visions upon Mrs. Vining's usual hours of slumber that she once overslept the next morning. At any rate, it was long after nine when she finished her solitary breakfast, crept up to the attic storeroom and threw back the lid of the Noah's Ark trunk.

"I hope I didn't muss it, putting it away in such a hurry," she said, feeling down into the corner. Then, a moment later, "What can't be true—yes, it is—the gown isn't there!" Beyond a doubt it was gone!

Mrs. Vining turned the contents of the trunk out upon the floor and looked into it and within it, and finally examined every article that it had contained, from a velvet reticule to a poke bonnet; but nowhere was there a square inch of gray silk dotted with pink rosebuds.

"Could the girls—"

Without further shaping the question, Mrs. Vining hurried out of the storeroom and downstairs into the blue bedroom, where the two older girls sat sewing.

"Aunt Tabitha's wedding gown!" she gasped. "It's gone!"

Then she stopped short. On the foot of the bed lay what had been the gray taffeta silk, now cut into multitudinous folds and sections.

"You cut it up! You cut up Aunt Tabitha's gown!" she murmured; and then sat down upon the bed and burst into tears.

In a moment both the girls were at her side. "Why, mother," said Ellen, "do you mean that you wanted that old silk? Why, I never dreamed of such a thing! You know you never seemed to care about clothes, and taffetta is in again, and I thought how pleased you'd be to see Bertha and I had got two nice waists out of the old gown we were always laughing about."

But for once the little mother took no interest in the girls' "things."

"I do care for clothes. I care a great deal!" she sobbed. "Do you suppose that because I am your mother—and forty years old—I don't want to have things nice? And I was going to make the silk over for the Avery reunion—[illegible] and in style!"

With these last words there was another rush of tears. The two girls looked at each other across the bowed head, with moist eyes. Then Ellen, taking the worn little hand in hers, said, gently:

"Forgive me, mother. We've been dreadfully selfish—and I'm afraid it's too late for you to use Aunt Tabitha's wedding gown now. But just let us have the black silk and we'll see what we can do with that."

What they did with it little Mrs. Vining never found out. Certainly the gown in which she appeared at the Avery reunion bore not the slightest resemblance to that ancient garment. But in writing to a Western relative who could not come to the reunion, the home-staying cousin said:

"Yes, Grace Vining—she that was Grace Avery—read the poem, and she looked just as pretty as a picture. You know as a girl she was always a belle and a beauty, but I don't think I ever saw her look lovelier than she did that night, dressed in a pale gray silk, one of those new taffetas you know they are wearing now, just like those that our grandmothers wore, all dotted over with violets.

"One of the nicest things about it was that the dress was a present from her two oldest daughters, who gave up new evening gowns this winter so she could have the silk. I told them they were real generous girls, but they said they thought their mother had been giving up for them long enough and it was time to change around. And besides, they said they didn't need anything new this winter, for they had each a lovely waist, made of their Aunt Tabitha's wedding gown."—Youth's Companion.

An Odd Irish Fishing Village.

Seventeen old fishing boats, one of which is said to have been built between 1740 and 1750, form the odd little fishing village of Carracross, on the west coast of Ireland. The only building in the place which is not constructed of an old boat is the priest's house, and this is built almost entirely of the driftwood which the ocean tide piles upon the rocky coast. There is not a tree of sufficient size to give building timber within eight miles of Carracross, and, though there is plenty of building stone, it is never used for anything except building fences around potato patches.

Father—"My daughter tells me, sir, that you have been making love to her." Clubberly—"I don't know why she should single me out among so many."—Detroit Free Press.

HUMAN NATURE.

"He was far too fat, and an awful bore!"
She often thought. While round he carried
Conviction of her lack of brains. Before
Long they were happily married.
—Puck.

THE KING'S JESTER.

Earth is the great King's kitchen, wide and vast,
Where each of us, a laboring cook, doth try
To bake for him some dainty unsurpassed,
To win his regal favor each doth vie.
For 'tis to him who cooks the daintiest fare
A boon, that he shall leave his humble place
And gladly mount the great King's marble stair,
To swagger in his halls in gold and lace.

Chance is a jolly jester, wand'ring through,
Who, bent on mischief, casts his eyes around
To find another scurvy trick or two
That to his far-famed foolship may redound.
He spies a pasty baking merrily,
And quickly, ere the busy cook can know,
With finger pokes it, swelling airily—
And lo!—our daintiest cake is turned to dough!
—Joseph H. Gregory, in Life.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

"I loved you," he raved, "from the first night I had your father's rating in Bradstreet's."—Philadelphia North American.

"What is the meaning of the word natural?" asked the teacher of a small pupil. "It's the way we act before we learn manners," was the answer.

He thought he would be shrewd,
And wed for money;
Well, now he is beshrewed—
Is that not funny?
—Philadelphia Press.

Wife (to unhappy husband)—"I wouldn't worry, John; it doesn't do any good to borrow trouble." Husband—"Borrow trouble? Great Caesar, my dear, I ain't borrowing trouble; I have it to lend."—Tit-Bits.

"I see that a Swiss engineer has invented a brake that will stop a flying express-train inside of eight yards." "Good. But how about the passengers—are they expected to stop, too?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Pearson—"I'd like to know who sent me this abusive letter. I'll bet it was that crank next door." Mrs. Pearson—"I don't think so, John. It must have been some one who knows you much better than he does."—Tit-Bits.

"I wish I knew whether there is anything in Mr. Shadyside or not," said Miss Bellefield to Miss Bloomfield. "Have you thought of testing him with the cathode ray?" asked the latter.—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

The rabbit met the Belgian hare
And said with grand and lordly air;
"When pledge of good luck man secures
My left hind leg's as good as yours."
—Chicago Record.

Towne—"That boy of Jones's is older than he looks, isn't he?" Browne—"I don't think so. Why?" Towne—"I saw him out skating to-day, and he never once tried to see how near he could go to the danger-sign without falling in."—Philadelphia Press.

"He quotes a great deal of poetry," said the young woman. "Then I shouldn't bother about him," said Miss Cayenne, "He is probably not serious. A man never quotes poetry except when he is too lazy to think of something to say on his own account."—Washington Star.

The Artificial Egg Here.

Science, prompted and urged by the commercial instinct, has demonstrated that casein, from ordinary cow's milk, is quite as good for baking as the finest hen eggs, and a company with $6,500,000 capital has been formed to manufacture out of it a substitute for the "fresh" and "strictly fresh" product of the poultry yard. One pound of casein is equal to six dozen eggs. August Belmont is a large stockholder in this corporation, which already, though only an infant, puts out about 1200 pounds a day, the equivalent of 86,400 eggs. The hen's only remaining advantage lies in the unhatchableness of the rival product, and its incasement in a box instead of a shell. She alone can be the mother of broods and flocks of chickens. Casein cannot deprive her of the cherished privilege. The artificial egg has arrived, but not the artificial broiler, fowl, capon, roaster, etc.—New York Press.

Condensed Reproof.

Occasionally there is to be found a proprietor of a second-hand book store who is something more than the nature of his business would seem to indicate. He regards his old and rare volumes rather as a collection than a stock of goods, and experiences a pang when he parts with one.

A flippant young man dropped into a second-hand store kept by a man of this kind.

Taking down several choice old books from the shelves, he fingered them carelessly. They happened to treat of abstruse subjects and did not appeal to him.

"Are any of these books for hire?" he asked, carelessly.

"No, young man," sharply answered the proprietor. "They are for lore."—Youth's Companion.

Japan Using Roman Letters.

Japan is taking a new step to approach Western civilization and withdraw from Chinese traditions by requiring officially that the Japanese language shall be taught in schools by means of Roman letters and no longer by the syllabic symbols.